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LIEUTENANT GENERAL LEON W. JOHNSON, USAF

Leon William Johnson was born at Columbia, Missouri, on September 13, 1904. He was graduated from the U.S. Military Academy on June 12, 1926 and commissioned a second lieutenant in the Regular Army.

General Johnson was then assigned to the 17th Infantry at Fort Crook, Nebraska. Entering Primary Flying School at Brooks Field, Texas, in March 1929, he was graduated from Advanced Flying School at Kelly Field, Texas, in February 1930. He was then assigned to the Fifth Observation Squadron at Mitchel Field, New York, and on March 24, 1930, was transferred to the Air Force.

In June 1932 General Johnson was assigned to the Second Observation Squadron at Nichols Field, Philippine Islands. Three years later he entered the California Institute of Technology and received his Master of Science degree in meteorology in June 1936. He then went to Barksdale Field, Louisiana, as base operations officer, and in July 1937 became regional control officer of the Third Weather Region and assumed command of the Third Weather Squadron there. A year later he entered the Air Corps Tactical School at Maxwell Field, Alabama, was graduated in August 1939, and resumed his duties at Barksdale. In July 1940 General Johnson joined the Third Bomb Group there and the following month became operations officer of the Third Bomb Group at Savannah, Georgia. He assumed command of the 10th Reconnaissance Squadron there that December.

Early in World War II General Johnson joined the Eighth Air Force as assistant chief of staff for operations and went with it to England in June 1942. The following January he assumed command of the 44th Bomb Group there, went with it to Africa on loan to the Ninth Air Force during that June and July, and returned to England. In September 1943 General Johnson organized the 14th Combat Bomb Wing which continued under his command until the end of hostilities in Europe.

After serving as chief of Personnel Services in Washington, General Johnson was appointed deputy to the assistant chief of air staff for personnel at Army Air Force headquarters in May 1946. The next April he assumed command of the 15th Air Force at Colorado Springs, Colorado. Goint to Europe in August 1948, General Johnson assumed command of the Third Air Division, U.S. Air Forces in Europe, and in February 1950 was given the additional duty of chief of the Military Assistance Advisory Group for the United Kingdom. The Third Air Division was redesignated the Third Air Force, USAFE, in May 1951, with General Johnson retaining command and also his additional duty.

On January 30, 1952, General Johnson assumed command of the Continental Air Command at Mitchel Air Force Base, New York, and on July 1, 1953, assumed the additional duty of Senior Air Force member on the Military Staff Committee of the United Nations.

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His decorations include the Congressional Medal of Honor, Silver Star, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross with one Oak Leaf Cluster, and the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters. His foreign decorations include the French Legion of Honor in the grade of Chevalier, and Croix de Guerre; Belgian Croix de Guerre; and British Distinguished Flying Cross. He is rated a command pilot, combat observer, aircraft observer, and technical observer.

PROMOTIONS

He was promoted to first lieutenant (permanent) December 1, 1931; to captain (temporary) March 15, 1935; to captain (permanent) June 12, 1936; to major (temporary) November 16, 1940; to lieutenant colonel (temporary) January 5, 1942; to colonel (temporary) March 1, 1942; to major (permanent) June 12, 1943; to brigadier general (temporary) November 6, 1943; to major general (temporary) October 27, 1947; to colonel (permanent) April 2, 1948; to brigadier general (permanent) June 11, 1948; to major general (permanent) August 11, 1950; to lieutenant general (temporary) July 5, 1952.

END

Up to date as of June 1954

*General Officer
file*

INTERNAL INFORMATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF INFORMATION SERVICES
OFFICE, SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE

Air Force News Service
Release Number 443

2 December 1955

KNOW YOUR AIR FORCE LEADERS -- LIEUT. GEN. LEON W. JOHNSON

Lieutenant General Leon William Johnson, Commander of the Continental Air Command at Mitchel Air Force Base in Long Island, New York, and holder of the Medal of Honor, was born in Columbia, Missouri, 13 September 1904.

Most of his boyhood was spent in Moline, Kansas. A graduate of the United States Military Academy, he later received a Master of Science degree in meteorology at the California Institute of Technology.

General Johnson was one of the first four flying officers in the Eighth Air Force and served as Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations in that command. In England, he assumed command of the Eighth's 44th Bomb Group which he took to Africa on loan to the Ninth Air Force for the attack on the Ploesti oil fields in Rumania. It was for extraordinary bravery in this raid that Congress awarded him the Medal of Honor.

After the war his various tours of duty were in the capacity of Chief of Personnel Services, Headquarters USAF; Deputy to the Ass't. Chief of Air Staff for Personnel; and Commander of the Strategic Air Command's Fifteenth Air Force, then at Colorado Springs, Colorado.

He returned to England in August 1948 where he organized the Third Air Division, which later was elevated to Air Force status, becoming the Third Air Force of the United States Air Forces in Europe. As such he provided facilities for the maintenance and support of SAC aircraft on rotational training missions and aircraft used in the Berlin Airlift. An additional duty during that tour was Chief of the Military Assistance Advisory Group for the United Kingdom.

M O R E

Along with his present duties as Commander of ConAC, General Johnson is USAF Representative to the Military Staff Committee of the United Nations..

General Johnson has two daughters. One is married to Lieut. Hoyt S. Vandenberg, Jr., son of the late General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, United States Air Force Chief of Staff, and the other to 2nd Lt. William Barnes, U. S. Army. The former has a son, Hoyt S. Vanderberg III, age 2.

General Johnson's hobbies are repairing and refinishing furniture, wood-working in general, and collecting functional and decorative copper originals.

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